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4.5 cm gripper

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Note from the Publisher

Dear Fellow Birdwatchers

Sarus and Siberian Cranes – the disturbing realities

In this issue we have published an article on the status of Sarus Crane (*Grus antigone*) in Maharashtra, by Mukund Dhurve *et al*. Sarus Crane, the tallest flying bird and the most iconic bird of the open wetland is venerated in India. Hindu mythology has that the legendary Maharshi Valmiki was inspired to pen the epic poem 'Ramayana' after witnessing a hunter slaying a Sarus Crane, which was passionately lost in courtship dance with its mate.

Not long ago one could count scores of Sarus Cranes in the marshy backwaters of Navegaon Bandh and other wetlands. But today, one should count oneself lucky even to get a fleeting glimpse of a Sarus Crane in its erstwhile stomping grounds. Hunting and loss of wetlands are mainly attributed for their drastic decline. Similarly, yet another globally threatened winter visitor to Keoladeo Ghana National Park (KNP) in Bharatpur, the Siberian Crane *(Grus leucogeranus)*, has not shown up for almost a decade now. It is claimed that these migratory birds of the central population which breed in Siberia in summer and visit India for wintering is now extinct. KNP's woes began when water from the Panchna dam was denied to the park and diverted for irrigation due to political compulsions.

The rising risk of extinction for avian species around the world is a surging dilemma for conservation biology. Several key avian populations such as the Siberian and the Sarus Cranes are enduring untold suffering and declining in numbers or disappearing locally. Habitat loss and degradation, introduction of non-native species, and the corollary of climate change are expected to further weaken the chances of survival for many avian populations, diminish their range, and impede ecological functions. The Sarus Crane is presently extinct in Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand and is classified as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List. The Philippine population of Sarus Crane was wiped out in the late 1960s and the reintroduction programs in Thailand have made use of birds from Cambodia.

Reintroduction is a plausible option for conservation of endangered species. Reintroduced populations are very much discernible and easily comprehended by people in a short period. For this reason, reintroduction is not only an option to secure public support and participation but also a platform for conservation. Reintroduction programs where birds from other wild populations or from captive breeding programs are released to their native range are recognized conservation strategies to restore locally extinct populations and more than a hundred avian species have been released in over 400 sites throughout the world in the last two decades.

Evidently the foremost avian reintroduction for conservation purposes was in the 1890s when the New Zealand government acknowledged that some native birds, particularly the flightless, were in steep decline as a result of predation by introduced weasels. The Resolution Island in Dusky Sound, Fiordland, was designated a sanctuary and a warden was entrusted with the task of transferring Kakapo *(Strigops habroptilus)* and Kiwi *(Apteryx sp.)* from the mainland on to the island. The warden dutifully relocated several hundred flightless birds, but the venture failed when the fugitive weasels invaded the Resolution Island in 1900, and gobbled up the hapless birds.

The earliest documented successful avian reintroductions for conservation purposes appear to be those of the early 1960s involving a New Zealand wattlebird, the saddleback *(Philesturnus carunculatus)*. By the early 20th century the two races of saddleback had been eradicated from their mainland habitats by introduced mammalian predators and were each restrained to a solitary island. Between 1920 and 1950 three attempts were made to relocate, but with little success. Nonetheless, effective reintroduction techniques were pioneered ultimately and self-sustaining populations of the North Island race *(P. c. rufusater)* were established on a number of islands. Since that time capture, captive-management, transportation, release techniques and associated protocols have continued to be refined, and reintroduction has become the mainstay in the conservation management of world's threatened birds.

While we are on the subject, George Archibald of the International Crane Foundation has offered to help introduce captive-bred Siberian Cranes into the wild once the water situation improves in Bharatpur. The captive bred cranes would spend the winter in the KNP and when they are ready to migrate, a specially designed micro-light aircraft would be used

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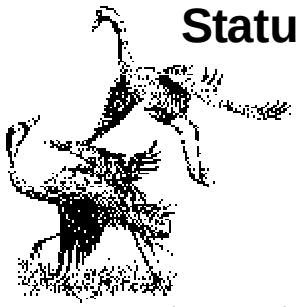

Status of Sarus Crane (*Grus antigone*) in Maharashtra

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Sarus Crane (*Grus antigone*) is found in the far eastern districts of Maharashtra, namely, Bhandara, Gondia and Chandrapur. The average rainfall in the Bhandara and Gondia districts is 1460mm. Bhandara and Gondia are having 52.21% of the land under forest cover. Bhandara has got 6,021 reservoirs and '*bodi*'s (small tanks) and Gondia has got 7,084 reservoirs and *bodi*'s. The main crop in these three districts is paddy. Sarus Cranes are mainly found nesting along the Bawanthadi and the Pangoli river basins within three to 10 kilometers range from these two rivers. These two rivers also form the boundary between Gondia and Balaghat districts (Madhya Pradesh). Sarus cranes were found in abundance in this area till 1935 (D'Abreu, 1923 & 1935).

Remembering the golden days

Mr. Narayandada Patil Dongarwar who is the son of famous *shikari*-turned-naturalist of the olden times Mr. Madhavrao Patil Dongarwar, had once seen 32 pairs of Sarus Cranes foraging in the marshy backwaters of Navegaon Bandh. Now Narayandada and his son Bhimsen Patil Dongarwar are struggling to save the avifauna and biodiversity of Navegaon National Park.

Sarus Cranes in Bhandara and Gondia District

Sanjeev Gajbhiye had located a nest of Sarus Cranes in 1998-99 at Kasarbodi in Tq. Tiroda in Gondia district. The circumference of the nest was eight feet. However he saw the nesting cranes only in 2000-2001. (N.B.: This pair was not counted in the Sarus count mentioned above).

One pair of Sarus Cranes was nesting at Navegaon Bandh National Park in Gondia district. It had laid two eggs and a forest guard was appointed to guard the nest and eggs. Unfortunately, this security guard failed to protect the nest and both the eggs were stolen on 10th or 11th of October 2002, thus resulting in the failure of the breeding attempt.

Members of the Gondia Nisarg Mandal are now monitoring the population of Sarus Cranes in Bhandara and Gondia districts. They found that there were at least 48 Sarus Cranes in the two districts during the months of July to September in 2009.

Table-1: Sarus Cranes in Eastern Maharashtra and bordering areas

Sl. No.	Name of Village/ Town	Habitat Type	No. of Sarus seen
1	Dasgaon	Paddy field	5
2	Kati	Paddy field	2
3	Zilmili	Reservoir	2
4	Ghat Temni	Tank (*Bodi*)	5
5	Panjra	Reservoir	4
6	Girola	Paddy field	3
7	Dhapewada	Paddy field	3
8	Tiroda	Paddyf ield	4
9	Sawra	Tank (*Bodi*)	4
10	Lavani (M.P.)	Paddy field	4
11	Futara (M.P.)	Tank (*Bodi*)	3
12	Ladcha (M.P.)	Paddy field	3
13	Lohara	Paddy field	2
14	SingarBandh, Bondgaon (Surban)	Reservoir	2
15	Amgaon Bodi	Tank *(Bodi)*	2
	Total	15 Sites	48

Chandrapur District, 2002

On 21st June 2002, a Sarus Crane count was carried out by the birdwatchers all over India. Members of Green Pigeon Nature Society at Chandrapur also participated in this census. The Sarus Crane count was organised by International Crane Foundation (USA) and Wildlife Institute of India. Many birdwatchers including Mr. Atul Dhamankar, M.S.R. Shad and Latish Dekate participated in this census. The Census was taken up at Junona and Mohurli lakes which are adjacent to the Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve and in Chandrapur district.

During this census eight Sarus Cranes were sighted by the birders. Six Sarus Cranes were sighted in Chandrapur district and the remaining two were sighted at Navegaon Bandh National Park in Gondia district.

Threats to Sarus Cranes

1. Eggs of Sarus Cranes are stolen and consumed by unidentified persons.

2. Poaching of birds for meat.

3. Lack of food for the cranes.

4. Introduction of exotic fish: The fisheries department promoted introduction of Common Carp **(***Cyprinus carpio***)** varieties of fish and these were introduced into the Navegaon Bandh reservoir, where the majority of Sarus Cranes used to breed. But now, even the number of migratory waterfowl, for which this reservoir was famous, has reduced.

5. Some people believe that the grass near the *bodi*'s (small tanks) has been over-cropped or overgrazed.

6. Farmers are now using more of insecticides and pesticides for the agriculture. This could have resulted in nesting failure. But this needs substantiation.

People's drive to Protect Sarus Cranes

Eight years ago two-three pairs of Sarus Cranes used to breed at the Singar Bandh bodi near Bondagaon (Surban) village in Arjuni (Morgaon) tehsil of Gondia district. But later only one pair started coming for breeding. And the eggs were being stolen. A guard was appointed by the department of Forests to guard the nest. Yet the eggs were stolen. At last, the forest department took the help of local people and the things changed. Now every year the pair is successfully raising chicks.

A "*Saras Samrakshan Samiti*" (Sarus Conservation Committee) was formed in Bondagon and is being presided by a senior person, Mr. Parasram Hatwar. The people of Bondgaon take out a "*Saras-Gidhad Samrakshan Yatra*" (Sarus and Vulture Conservation Rally) during the Wildlife Week every year. They are giving protection to the solitary pair of Sarus Cranes in their village. The sincere efforts of forest officers in Gothangaon to protect the nesting Sarus Cranes in their area are also appreciable.

Recommended conservation measures

1. Public awareness: Non-governmental organisations and the forest department need to conduct public awareness programmes regarding the importance of Sarus Cranes in the area. The campaign should be concentrated in villages where the Sarus Cranes are nesting. The students should be the focus of such campaigns.

2. Managing the farmers

Generally the Sarus Cranes nest in paddy fields or at the bank of small *bodi*'s (small tanks). The farmer in whose paddy fields the Sarus nests feels forlorn because it takes away nearly 20 sq. feet of his land during the season. Hence, the farmers need be informed about the endangered status of the cranes and other beneficial aspects as pointed out hereunder:

(a) Farmers need to be given some compensation for the losses suffered.

(b) Farmers need to be convinced of the benefits accrued due to the presence of Sarus Cranes in his field and that the cranes eat the insect pests in their fields and protect their paddy crop.

(c) Sarus Cranes do not eat paddy.

(d) Such of those farmers supporting the cause of Sarus Cranes need to be recognised and felicitated by the Forest Department and Conservation Groups.

(e) They can be felicitated as "*Sarus Mitra*" or "*Sarus Palak*" (Friends of Sarus or Guardians of Sarus) and certificates can be given.

(f) The religious importance of Sarus in the epic Ramayana should be emphasized among the people.

(g) During media coverage the farmers (and not the birdwatchers) should get importance as the true guardians of Sarus.

(h) When birders from outside visit the area to watch the Sarus, the local farmers should be called and lauded as the real protectors of the Sarus Cranes.

(i) The farmers can be declared as 'guardians' of the nesting pairs during the nesting period. Thus, the farmers will volunteer to adopt the Sarus pair during the breeding season and look after their well being.

(j) The farmers need to know that it is an endangered species and is protected under Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. And that it is punishable to harm the cranes or steal their eggs.

Acknowledgment

The authors wish to thank Mr. Narayandada Dongarwar, Mr. Bhimsen Dongarwar and Mr. Nagpurkar (member of Envocare) and the villagers who are helping the Sarus Cranes. Thanks to Mr. Anil Badge (Range Forest Officer), Mr. Bopche (Round Officer) at Bondgaon for their initiative in the conservation of Sarus Cranes. Thanks to Advocate Sanjeev Gajbhiye for sharing his information.

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Checklist of the birds of Garbhanga Reserve Forest, Assam, India

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Introduction

Assam is a transitional area of two hot spots *viz* Himalayan and Indo-Burma hot spot. It is also considered as a part of North eastern biogeographical zone of India.

Garbhanga Reserve Forest represents a part of the green belt region around Guwahati. The forest is serving the resident of the city of Guwahati as a buffer against the raising pollution and CO_2 levels. There are quite a good number of endangered and endemic species of animals in and around Guwahati city, which is comparatively higher than other cities of the country (Choudhury 2000). The forest pattern of Assam is broadly divided in to four types *viz* evergreen and semievergreen, hills and plains which contain more than 500 species of terrestrial avifauna (Deka *et al.* 1996).

Assam is very rich in avifaunal diversity consisting of more than 900 species and subspecies, out of 1300 species found in India (Choudhury 2000, Javed *et al*. 2000). The Guwahati city contains 10 Reserve Forests and 2 Wildlife Sanctuaries in its green belt.

Information regarding avifaunal diversity in and around Guwahati city has been provided by Borah and Bhattacharjee (1985), Saikia and Bhattacharjee (1989), Barman *et al.* (1995), Choudhury (2000), Choudhury *et al*. (2008), Lahkar (2009), Lahkar (Unpublished) (2007). The information regarding the diversity and distribution of avifauna in the reserve forests located in side the Guwahati is not well documented. So, this paper aims to provide very baseline information on the avifaunal diversity of the Garbhanga Reserve forest.

Study area

Garbhanga Reserve Forest is a hilly area adjoining the hill range of Meghalaya. It covers an area of 1460 hectares. The forest borders on the eastern and northern side by Meghalaya hilly ranges, western side by Rani Reserve forest and Southern side by Guwahati city and Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary, which are literally connected with the forest or it has no natural or artificial barriers. Thus it could be referred as an ecotone. The water resources are mainly the hill streams coming down from Meghalaya. Though the streams are perennial the water current is stronger during monsoon. The forest is mainly dominated by teak plants. The climatic condition can be divided into four types *viz* Pre-monsoon, Monsoon, Post-monsoon and winter. The significant factor of the climate is the humidity. The maximum humidity was recorded in the monsoon season (80-90%) (Kakati 2002). Probably hilly streams which are flowing throughout the year could help to intake such high humidity level. Thus the insect diversity is also very high specially butterflies (Kakati 2002). The forest type is mainly dominated by the moist deciduous forest, mix forest, evergreen patch and semi-evergreen patches were also found in the interior parts of the forest.

The dominant trees were Sal (*Shorea robusta*), Teak (*Tectona grandis*), Champa (*Michelia champaka*), Semul (*Bombax ceiba*), Makai (*Shorea assamica*), Ahot (*Ficus religiosa*), Khair (*Acacia catechu*), etc. Below the crowns of dominant trees develop several varieties of plants, which are shade loving. The lower vegetations are very thick with numerous varieties of herbs, shrubs, and grasses.

Methodology

The study was conducted discontinuously for the two years from 2005-2007 using direct visual count. Existing forest trails were used to cover the forest by foot. The observations were carried out mainly in the morning between 6:30 and 10:30 hrs. The birds were sighted using a binocular (8x40) and only confirmed species are included in the checklist. For the spot identification we followed standard field guide (Grimmett *et al.* 1999) and nomenclature and classification is followed according to Manakadan and Pittie (2001).

Results

In all 128 species of birds belonging to 41 families (Table-1) have so far been recorded. Highest number of species was recorded from the family Turdinae (n=13 species) followed by Accipitridae (n=7 species). Of these 85.16% (n=109 species) was resident, 12.50% (n=16 species) winter visitor and 2.34% (n=3 species) was recorded as summer visitor. Based on the food and foraging from the present data it is apparent that the avifauna of the forest is dominated by Insectivore 58.59% (n=75 species) followed by Carnivore 9.38% (n=12 species) and Omnivore (8.59%, n=11 species respectively).

During the study we recorded some notable species like Brahminy Kite (*Haliastur Indus),* Pied Harrier (*Circus melanoleucos),* Oriental Honey-Buzzard (*Pernis ptilorhynchus),* Red-headed Trogon (*Harpactes erythrocephalus),* Rufous-necked Hornbill (*Aceros nipalensis),* Great Slaty Woodpecker (*Mulleripicus pulverulentus),* Hooded Pitta (*Pitta sordida),* Siberian Rubythroat (*Luscinia calliope),* Green Cochoa (*Cochoa viridis),* White-bellied Yuhina (*Yuhina zantholeuca),* Common Hill-Myna (*Gracula religiosa),* Greater Racket-tailed Drongo

(*Dicrurus paradiseus),* of them Hooded Pitta and White-bellied Yuhina was observed only once.

Mining and anthropogenic impacts are the major problems of the Garbhanga Reserve Forest. Stone mining is incessantly going on, as it encourages more quarries to establish on the nearby Meghalaya hills which could seriously harm the ecological balance and as well as the flora and fauna of the forest. As a matter of fact, most of the streams are coming down from the Magahalaya hills. Mining can affect the direction and flow of streams which are currently maintaining an optimum humidity for the insects (Kakati 2002). Significantly most of the birds were recorded as insectivore (57.25%). So, it is discernible that in near future it will affect the bird diversity and composition if things are allowed to go on. Secondly collection of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) and uncontrolled felling of trees is also a major concern for the sustainable management of the forest. The forest has a good population of Asian Elephant (*Elephus maximus*) and several elephant corridors are located inside the forest which is internally linked with the Rani forest. Moreover the whole landscape could be declared as a good elephant habitat.

Acknowledgment

We sincerely acknowledge Aaranyak for giving us all the technical help. We also convey our thanks to Dr. Dinesh Kakati, Lecturer, Guwahati College, for his kind guidance and useful tips about the forest. Lastly, we are thankful to Mr. Naba Jyoti Sarma for giving us a wonderful company during the data collection.

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Table- **Checklist of the birds of Garbhanga Reserve forest**

Sl. No.	Common Name	Scientific Name	H	S
	1.Family	**Ardeidae**		
1	Cattle Egret	*Bubulcus ibis*	I	R
	2.Family	**Accipitridae**		
2	Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*	C	R
3	Brahminy Kite	*Haliastur indus*	C	R
4	Crested Serpent-Eagle	*Spilornis cheela*	C	R
5	Pied Harrier	*Circus melanoleucos*	C	WV
6	Shikra	*Accipiter badius*	C	R
7	Oriental Honey-Buzzard	*Pernis ptilorhynchus*	C	R
8	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	*Accipiter nisus*	C	WV
	3.Family	**Falconidae**		
9	Common Kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus*	C	WV
	4.Family	**Rallidae**		
10	White-breasted Waterhen	*Amaurornis phoenicurus*	I	R
	5.Family	**Columbidae**		
11	Oriental Turtle-Dove	*Streptopelia orientalis*	G	R
12	Spotted Dove	*Streptopelia chinensis*	G	R
13	Eurasian Collared-Dove	*Streptopelia decaocto*	G	R
14	Emerald Dove	*Chalcophaps indica*	G	R
15	Thick-billed Green-Pigeon	*Treron curvirostra*	G	R
16	Yellow-legged Green-Pigeon	*Treron phoenicoptera*	G	R
	6.Family	**Psittacidae**		
17	Alexandrine Parakeet	*Psittacula eupatria*	F	R
18	Rose-ringed Parakeet	*Psittacula krameri*	F	R
19	Red-breasted Parakeet	*Psittacula alexandri*	F	R
	7.Family	**Cuculidae**		
20	Brainfever Bird	*Hierococcyx varius*	I	R
21	Indian Cuckoo	*Cuculus micropterus*	I	R
22	Asian Koel	*Eudynamys scolopacea*	F,I	R
23	Small Green-billed Malkoha	*Phaenicophaeus viridirostris*	I	R

24	Greater Coucal	*Centropus sinensis*	I	R
	8.Family	**Tytonidae**		
25	Barn Owl	*Tyto alba*	C	R
	9.Family	**Strigidae**		
26	Brown Fish-Owl	*Ketupa zeylonensis*	C	R
27	Spotted Owlet	*Athene brama*	C	R
	10.Family	**Apodidae**		
28	Asian Palm-Swift	*Cypsiurus balasiensis*	I	R
29	House Swift	*Apus affinis*	I	R
	11.Family	**Trogonidae**		
30	Red-headed Trogon	*Harpactes erythrocephalus*	I	R
	12.Family	**Alcedinidae**		
31	Small Blue Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*	P	R
32	White-breasted Kingfisher	*Halcyon smyrnensis*	P	R
33	Lesser Pied Kingfisher	*Ceryle rudis*	P	R
	13.Family	**Meropidae**		
34	Small Bee-eater	*Merops orientalis*	I	R
35	Blue-tailed Bee-eater	*Merops philippinus*	I	SV
	14.Family	**Coraciidae**		
36	Indian Roller	*Coracias benghalensis*	I	R
	15.Family	**Upupidae**		
37	Common Hoopoe	*Upupa epops*	I	R
	16.Family	**Capitonidae**		
38	Lineated Barbet	*Megalaima lineate*	F	R
39	Blue-throated Barbet	*Megalaima asiatica*	F	R
40	Coppersmith Barbet	*Megalaima haemacephala*	F	R
	17.Family	**Picidae**		
41	White browed Piculet	*Sasia ochracea*	I	R
42	Great Slaty Woodpecker	*Mulleripicus pulverulentus*	I	R
43	Fulvous-breasted Pied Woodpecker	*Dendrocopos macei*	I	R
44	Small Yellow-naped Woodpecker	*Picus chlorolophus*	I	R
45	Large Yellow-naped Woodpecker	*Picus flavinucha*	I	R
46	Greater Golden-backed Woodpecker	*Chrysocolaptes lucidus*	I	R
	18.Family	**Pittidae**		
47	Hooded Pitta	*Pitta sordida*	I	SV
	19.Family	**Hirundinidae**		
48	Striated Swallow	*Hirundo striolata*	I	R
49	Common Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*	I	WV
	20.Family	**Motacillidae**		
50	White Wagtail	*Motacilla alba*	I	WV
51	Citrine Wagtail	*Motacilla citreola*	I	WV
52	Grey Wagtail	*Motacilla cinerea*	I	WV
53	Paddyfield Pipit	*Anthus rufulus*	I	R
54	Oriental Tree Pipit	*Anthus hodgsoni*	I	R
	21.Family	**Campephagidae**		
55	Large Cuckoo-Shrike	*Coracina macei*	I	R
56	Scarlet Minivet	*Pericrocotus flammeus*	I	R
	22.Family	**Pycnonotidae**		
57	Black-headed Bulbul	*Pycnonotus atriceps*	F	R
58	Black-crested Bulbul	*Pycnonotus melanicterus*	F	R
59	Red-vented Bulbul	*Pycnonotus cafer*	F	R
60	White-throated Bulbul	*Alophoixus flaveolus*	F	R
	23.Family	**Irenidae**		
61	Common Iora	*Aegithina tiphia*	I	R
62	Jerdon's Chloropsis	*Chloropsis cochinchinensis*	I	R
63	Gold-fronted Chloropsis	*Chloropsis aurifrons*	I	R
64	Asian Fairy-Bluebird	*Irena puella*	I	R
	24.Family	**Laniidae**		
65	Brown Shrike	*Lanius cristatus*	I	WV
66	Grey-backed Shrike	*Lanius tephronotus*	I	WV
	25.Family	**Turdinae**		
67	Blue Whistling-Thrush	*Myiophonus caeruleus*	I	R
68	Tickell's Thrush	*Turdus unicolor*	I	R

Enroll a Friend

If every Newsletter member could enrol just one new member our reach and linkage would be doubled immediately!

Will you Help ?

Please give the membership form to a friend and urge him/her to join.

69	Dark-throated Thrush	*Turdus ruficollis*	I	R
70	Siberian Rubythroat	*Luscinia calliope*	I	R
71	Oriental Magpie-Robin	*Copsychus saularis*	I	R
72	White-rumped Shama	*Copsychus malabaricus*	I	R
73	Black Redstart	*Phoenicurus ochruros*	I	WV
74	White-capped Redstart	*Chaimarrornis leucocephalus*	I	WV
75	Plumbeous Redstart	*Rhyacornis fuliginosus*	I	WV
76	Black-backed Forktail	*Enicurus immaculatus*	I	R
77	Spotted Forktail	*Enicurus maculatus*	I	R
78	Common Stonechat	*Saxicola torquata*	I	R
79	Green Cochoa	*Cochoa viridis*	I	R
	26.Family	**Timaliinae**		
80	Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush	*Garrulax monileger*	I	R
81	Spot throated babbler	*Pellorneum tickelli*	I	R
82	Jungle Babbler	*Turdoides striatus*	I	R
83	White-bellied Yuhina	*Yuhina zantholeuca*	I	R
	27.Family	**Sylviinae**		
84	Ashy Prinia	*Prinia socialis*	I	R
85	Common Tailorbird	*Orthotomus sutorius*	I	R
86	Dusky Warbler	*Phylloscopus fuscatus*	I	R
87	Tickell's Warbler	*Phylloscopus affinis*	I	WV
88	Blyth's Leaf-Warbler	*Phylloscopus reguloides*	I	WV
89	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher-Warbler	*Abroscopus superciliaris*	I	R
	28.Family	**Muscicapinae**		
90	Slaty-backed Flycatcher	*Ficedula hodgsonii*	I	WV
91	Red-throated Flycatcher	*Ficedula parva*	I	WV
92	Verditer Flycatcher	*Eumyias thalassina*	I	SV
93	Small Niltava	*Niltava macgrigoriae*	I	R
94	Grey-headed Flycatcher	*Culicicapa ceylonensis*	I	R
	29.Family	**Monarchinae**		
95	Black-naped Monarch-Flycatcher	*Hypothymis azurea*	I	R
	30.Family	**Paridae**		
96	Great Tit	*Parus major*	I	R
97	Green-backed Tit	*Parus monticolus*	I	R
	31.Family	**Sittidae**		
98	Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch	*Sitta castanea*	I	R
99	Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	*Sitta frontalis*	I	R
	32.Family	**Nectariniidae**		
100	Purple Sunbird	*Nectarinia asiatica*	N	R
101	Mrs. Gould's Sunbird	*Aethopyga gouldiae*	N	R
102	Green-tailed Sunbird	*Aethopyga nipalensis*	N	R
103	Crimson Sunbird	*Aethopyga siparaja*	N	R
	33.Family	**Zosteropidae**		
104	Oriental White-eye	*Zosterops palpebrosus*	I	R
	34.Family	**Estrildidae**		
105	White-rumped Munia	*Lonchura striata*	G	R
106	Spotted Munia	*Lonchura punctulata*	G	R
107	Black-headed Munia	*Lonchura malacca*	G	R
	35.Family	**Passerinae**		
108	House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*	I,G	R
109	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	*Passer montanus*	I,G	R
	36.Family	**Ploceinae**		
110	Baya Weaver	*Ploceus philippinus*	G	R
	37.Family	**Sturnidae**		
111	Asian Pied Starling	*Sturnus contra*	O	R
112	Grey-headed Starling	*Sturnus malabaricus*	O	R
113	Common Myna	*Acridotheres tristis*	O	R
114	Jungle Myna	*Acridotheres fuscus*	O	R
115	Common Hill-Myna	*Gracula religiosa*	O	R
	38.Family	**Oriolidae**		
116	Black-headed Oriole	*Oriolus xanthornus*	O	R
117	Black-naped Oriole	*Oriolus chinensis*	O	R
118	Maroon Oriole	*Oriolus traillii*	O	R
	39.Family	**Dicruridae**		
119	Black Drongo	*Dicrurus macrocercus*	C	R
120	Ashy Drongo	*Dicrurus leucophaeus*	I	R
121	Bronzed Drongo	*Dicrurus aeneus*	I	R
122	Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo	*Dicrurus remifer*	I	R
123	Spangled Drongo	*Dicrurus hottentottus*	I	R
124	Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	*Dicrurus paradiseus*	I	R
	40.Family	**Artamidae**		
125	Ashy Woodswallow	*Artamus fuscus*	I	R
	41.Family	**Corvidae**		
126	Indian Treepie	*Dendrocitta vagabunda*	O	R
127	House Crow	*Corvus splendens*	O	R
128	Jungle Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*	O	R

Abbreviations: **H-** Food Habits**, S-** Status, **R**- Resident, **WV**- Winter visitor, **SV**- Summer visitor, **O**- Omnivorous, **F**- Frugivorous, **G**-Granivorous, **I**-Insectivorous, **C**- Carnivorous, **N**-Necterivorous.

Observations at the nests of Jerdon's Chloropsis (*Chloropsis cochinchinensis)*

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Jerdon's Chloropsis (*Chloropsis cochinchinensis)* belongs to the Irenidae family. It is a small green bird found throughout the Indian peninsula, in evergreen patches (Ali & Ripley 2001). The female has faint blue colour at the chin/throat, while the male has olive black patch at the chin. This species feeds on insects, fruits, and flower nectar. Both the birds are more vocal during their breeding period. They mimic many other birds' calls in that area.

Observations were carried out in Chiplun city (17° 31' N: 73° 31' E), Ratnagiri district, Maharashtra. Chiplun is 50 km away from the Arabian Sea and 13 km away from the Western Ghats. The temperature averages between 23°C and 40°C. The nesting studies were carried out in August 2006 and in June 2009. To observe inside the nest we had fixed a close circuit camera at a distance of about two feet from the nest.

In all two nests were observed near my house, which is near the Mumbai-Goa highway. Birds were not disturbed by the fast moving vehicles on the highway.

Chloropsis's nest is shaped like a hammock and hung between the forks of a branch in a lofty tree. The nest is a small deep cup made up of fine rootlets, grass and is plastered with cobweb (Ali & Ripley, 2001). The nests were built at a height of 6-8 meters above the ground on a *Mangifera indica* tree. In our observations we noticed that the female alone was building the nest. The female took 5 days to complete the nest.

Nest building was observed throughout the day, but frequency decreased in the afternoons. I could not get references about this aspect elsewhere. At one nesting site the female was seen collecting dry fibers from a squirrel's nest.

The clutch size was 2 or 3 eggs. Eggs were pale creamy white, sparingly marked with specks and hairlines of blackish chiefly at the broader end. Average size of 31 eggs given by Baker is 21.1mm x 15.1mm (Ali & Ripley, 2001).

Both the eggs were laid in the mornings at an interval of 24 hours each. Incubation was observed after the first egg was laid. Only the female was seen incubating the eggs. The male was observed staying close to the nest and warning the female at nest or warding off predators. The female preferred to crouch and lay deep in the nest while incubating. She always entered the nest discreetly from behind the branches, but she usually left the nest from the front side.

On 17th September 2006, we observed continuously for 390 minutes. In that period only the female incubated the eggs for 204 minutes. The nest remained unattended for 186 minutes, rather intermittently. On one instance the female continuously incubated the eggs for 96 minutes. On arrival to the nest, the female used to gave a call as a signal to its mate before commencing the incubation. During heavy rainfall a very unusual behaviour was observed. The female covered her head with her wings. She never shook her body to dislodge the water droplets which were on her back. She was seen sucking those droplets, and was also observed puffing up her body to cover the whole nest.

On 18th September 2006 the eggs were seen predated some time between 08.49 hrs and 14.55 hrs. At 14.55 hrs the female came to the nest calling as usual and looked inside the nest. She touched the base of the nest with her beak. She gave a loud shrill alarmed call and sat for a minute or so and then flew away. She was observed near the nest for an hour uttering loud distressed calls. By the next day the empty nest was found completely torn-up and destroyed.

In 2009, a pair was observed chirping loudly from the *Mangifera indica* tree on 7th June. The pair was seen wandering from branch to branch. On the next day in the morning the female started building the nest in the fork of a branch.

During nest building period which we observed for 1080 minutes, the female visited the nest about 132 times to build it. The male was seen wandering around the nest with the female articulating various calls.

On 21st June 2009 we took continuous observations from 08.00 hrs to 17.00 hrs. In that period we observed the female incubating the eggs for 432 minute. For the remaining 108 min the eggs were left unattended. On one instance the female continuously incubated the eggs for 78 minutes. In this nest also, on arrival to the nest, the female used to gave a call as a signal to its mate before commencing the incubation.

But unfortunately this nest was also found damaged and eggs eaten by an unknown predator.

Summery

Here we have reported some important facts regarding breeding of Jerdon's Chloropsis (*Chloropsis cochinchinensis)* for the first time. Female took 5 days to complete the nest. Female alone builds the nest and carries out the incubation. Male was observed hanging around and guarding nest with various calls. He never entered the nest during incubation.

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Avian species sighted and update of checklist from Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve

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Introduction

The central Indian highlands of the state of Madhya Pradesh comprise the Satpura and Vindhya Ranges which are separated by River Narmada. They are ornithologically little explored, with just a handful of papers published on local avifauna: Moss King (1911) from Damoh and Sagar, Whitehead (1911) from Sehore, D'Abreu (1912) from Balaghat, Osmaston (1922) from Pachmarhi, Briggs (1931) from Mhow, Hewetson (1939) from Betul, Newton et al. (1986) from Kanha, Tyabji (1994) from Bandhavgarh, Mehta (1998) from Bori and, more recently, Pasha et al. (2004) from Pench. Extensive surveys were however carried out in western and northern Madhya Pradesh, mostly north of the Vindhyas (Edwin-Barnes (1886); Ali and Whistler (1939 & 1940). Hewetson's (1956) comprehensive account of all his bird observations across the region was another major document on central Indian avifauna. The only published scientific collections from the central highlands were by D'Abreu (1912 & 1935) for Nagpur Museum.

A total of 1224 species of birds occur in India, Islam & Rahmani (2002) of which 488 species and sub species are reported from Madhya Pradesh Chandra & Singh (2004). A list of 308 Bird species was observed on bird's life of Madhya Pradesh and published by Hewetson (1956). Choudhary & Khan (2002) have listed 241 species of birds from the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve. Recent studies by Kailash Chandra & R.P.Gupta (2009) reports 252 species belonging to 169 genera under 43 families of 17 orders.

Study Area and Methods

Bandhavgarh lies on the extreme north eastern border of the state of Madhya Pradesh and the northern flanks of the eastern Satpura mountain range. Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve is located on the coordinates $23^0$30' 12" to $23^0$46' 30" N and $80^0$47'15" to $81^0$11'45" E at altitudes between 410m and 810m. Presently the reserve falls in two districts Umaria and Katni. The flora and fauna is well concentrated in the reserve. The park holds large Carnivores like Tiger *Panthera tigris*, Leopard *Panthera pardus*, Hyena *Hyaena hyaena*, Sloth bear *Melursus ursinus*, Jackal *Canis aureus*, ungulates like Spotted deer or Chital *Axis axis*, Sambar *Cervus unicolor*, Barking deer *Muntjacus muntjak*, Blue bull *Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Chinkara *Gazella bennettii,* Wild pig *Sus scrofa*, along with primates such as Common Langur *Semnopithecus entellus*, Rhesus monkey *Macaca mulatta* etc. The ungulates and primates contribute as prey base mostly to the large carnivores in the reserve.

The main forest type in the park is Tropical Moist deciduous Forests. The Dominant Species is Sal *Shorea robusta* interspersed with dense clumps of bamboo throughout the park. There are some other dominant species like *Syzygium cumini, Terminalia arjuna, Madhuca indica, Cassia fistula, Albizzia odoratissima, Casaeria tomentosa & Buchanania lanzan* in the study region. Large grassy patches or meadows are plenty and the reserve is crisscrossed by a number of rivers and streams.

The park lies within the tropical monsoon climatic zone, characterized by well-defined winters, summers, and rains. Temperature is rising from 2.2 °C (36 °F) to 44 °C (111 °F) have been recorded. Average rainfall is 1,173 millimeters (46 in), most of which falls during the monsoons. Some rains result from the cyclonic depressions as well, between the months of November and February.

The tourist season starts from October and ends by June. The park mainly attracts Indian and foreign tourists.

Methods

The study was conducted in 19 beats which come under 4 ranges namely Tala, Khitauli, Magdhi & Kallawah. The study was carried out from April 2010 to July 2010. The birds were observed from morning 6.00 to 10.00am and evening from 4.30 to 6.30pm with the help of 8X42 binoculars and the identifications were made with the help of standard field guide of Krys Kazmierczak *et al.* 2000. The common and scientific names of the birds have been followed as per Manakadan & Pittie 2001.

Results & Discussion

A total of 144 species of birds belonging to 51 families were recorded from the study area during the study period. This study reports 8 species, which had not been recorded earlier from the study area (table 1) with reference of Kailash Chandra & R.P.Gupta (2009). More species were sighted in a family Accipitridae (11), followed by Turdinae (9), Columbidae, Sturnidae (8 species each) and Cuculidae, Motacillidae and Ardeidae (7 species each). During the study period 3 critically endangered, 1 vulnerable, and 2 near threatened species (IUCN, 2008) were recorded from this study in the reserve (table 2). Majority of species were found to be resident (84%), followed by winter visitors (13%) and migrants (3%). The birds were classified in to different feeding guilds of which large group comprise of insectivores 54%, Piscivorous 14 % followed by Frugivorous 13%. During the study time we also recorded some road kills of birds (i.e. Green Bee-eater near Mahaman dam, Indian Roller near Andheri Geria, and Jungle Babbler near Kathali nalla along with some other reptile species).

During the study period the sighting of the birds is very frequent inside the park which supports a good number of avifauna. Tourism could be posing some problems for the avian diversity as we recorded some road kills inside the reserve.

Table 1:- List of 8 Species Not Recorded Earlier

S. No	Common Name	Scientific Name
1	Brahminy Kite	*Haliastur indus*
2	Black Eagle	*Ictinaetus malayensis*
3	Lesser Sand Plover	*Charadrius mongolus*
4	Common Redshank	*Tringa tetanus*
5	Indian Blue Robin	*Luscinia brunnea*
6	Common Starling	*Sturnus vulgaris*
7	Bank Myna	*Acridotheres ginginianus*
8	Black-naped Oriole	*Oriolus chinensis*

Table 2:- Shows species of Conservation interest observed in the reserve.

S.N	Status (IUCN, 2010)	Scientific Name
	CriticallyEndangered	
1	Indian White-backed Vulture	*Gyps benghalensis*
2	Long-billed Vulture	*Gyps indicus*
3	Red headed Vulture	*Sarcogyps calvus*
	Vulnerable	
4	Lesser Adjutant-Stork	*Leptoptilos javanicus*
	Near Threatened	
5	Malabar Pied Hornbill	*Anthracoceros coronatus*
6	Painted Stork	*Mycteria leucocephala*

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List of Bird Species observed in Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, (April-July 2010)

Ardeidae

1. Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*
2. Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*
3. Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*
4. Large Egret *Casmerodius albus*
5. Median Egret *Mesophoyx intermedia*
6. Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*
7. Black Bittern *Dupetor flavicollis*

Ciconiidae

8. Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala*
9. White-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus*

10. Lesser Adjutant-Stork *Leptoptilos javanicus*

Threskiornithidae

11. Black Ibis *Pseudibis papillosa*
12. Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

Anatidae

13. Cotton Teal *Nettapus coromandelianus*

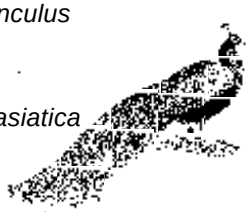
Accipitridae

14. Black Kite *Milvus migrans*
15. Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*
16. Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*
17. Indian White-backed Vulture *Gyps bengalensis*
18. Long-billed Vulture *Gyps indicus*
19. Red-headed Vulture *Sarcogyps calvus*
20. Crested Serpent-Eagle *Spilornis cheela*
21. Shikra *Accipiter badius*
22. White-eyed Buzzard *Butastur teesa*
23. Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malayensis*
24. Changeable Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus cirrhatus*

Falconidae

25. Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Phasianidae



26. Red Junglefowl *Gallus gallus*
27. Jungle Bush-Quail *Perdicula asiatica*
28. Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*

Turnicidae

29. Common Buttonquail *Turnix suscitator*

Gruidae.

30. Sarus Crane *Grus antigone*

Jacanidae

31. Bronze-winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus*

Rostratulidae

32. Greater Painted-Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*

Charadriidae

33. Yellow-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus malabaricus*
34. Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus*
35. Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* Scopoli,
36. Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*

Scolopacidae

37. Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*
38. Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*
39. Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Burhinidae

40. Eurasian Thick Knee *Burhinus oedicnemus*

Pteroclididae

41. Painted Sandgrouse *Pterocles indicus*

Columbidae

42. Blue Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*
43. Oriental Turtle-Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*
44. Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*
45. Little Brown Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*
46. Red Collared-Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica*
47. Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*
48. Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica*
49. Yellow-legged Green-Pigeon *Treron phoenicoptera*

Psittacidae

50. Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria*
51. Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*
52. Plum-headed Parakeet *Psittacula cyanocephala*

Cuculidae

53. Brainfever Bird *Hierococcyx varius*
54. Pied Crested Cuckoo *Clamator jacobinus*
55. Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus*
56. Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*
57. Sirkeer Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus leschenaultii*
58. Asian Koel *Eudynamys scolopacea*
59. Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis*

Strigidae

60. Brown Fish-Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis*
61. Mottled Wood-Owl *Strix ocellata*
62. Jungle Owlet *Glaucidium radiatum*
63. Spotted Owlet *Athene brama*
64. Brown Hawk-Owl *Ninox scutulata*

Apodidae

65. Indian Jungle Nightjar *Caprimulgus indicus*
66. Franklin's Nightjar (savannah) *Caprimulgus affinis*
67. House Swift *Apus affinis*

Hemiprocnidae

68. Crested Tree-Swift *Hemiprocne coronata*

Alcedinidae

69. Small Blue Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*
70. Stork-billed Kingfisher *Halcyon capensis*
71. White-breasted Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*
72. Lesser Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*

Meropidae

73. Blue-bearded Bee-eater *Nyctyornis athertoni*
74. Small Bee-eater *Merops orientalis*

Coraciidae

75. Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis*

Upupidae

76. Common Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Bucerotidae

77. Indian Grey Hornbill *Ocyceros birostris*
78. Malabar Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros coronatus*

Capitonidae

79. Brown-headed Barbet *Megalaima zeylanica*
80. Coppersmith Barbet *Megalaima haemacephala*

Picidae

81. Little Scaly-bellied Green Woodpecker *Picus xanthopygaeus*
82. Lesser Golden-backed Woodpecker *Dinopium benghalense*

Pittidae

83. Indian Pitta *Pitta brachyura*

Hirundinidae

84. Plain Martin *Riparia paludicola*

85. Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*
86. Streak-throated Swallow *Hirundo fluvicola*

Motacillidae

87. Forest Wagtail *Dendronanthus indicus*
88. White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*
89. Large Pied Wagtail *Motacilla maderaspatensis*
90. Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*
91. Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*
92. Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*
93. Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus*

Campephagidae

94. White-bellied Minivet *Pericrocotus erythropygius*

Pycnonotidae

95. Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer*

Irenidae

96. Jerdon's Chloropsis *Chloropsis cochinchinensis*
97. Gold-fronted Chloropsis *Chloropsis aurifrons*

Laniidae

98. Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus*
99. Rufous-backed Shrike *Lanius schach*

Turdinae

100. Orange-headed Thrush *Zoothera citrina*
101. Blue Rock-Thrush *Monticola solitarius*
102. Blue-headed Rock-Thrush *Monticola cinclorhynchus*
103. Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis*
104. Indian Robin *Saxicoloides fulicata*
105. Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*
106. Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*
107. Pied Bushchat *Saxicola caprata*
108. Indian Blue Robin *Luscinia brunnea*

Timaliinae

109. Jungle Babbler *Turdoides striatus*
110 Large Grey Babbler *Turdoides malcolmi*

Sylviinae

111. Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius*
112. Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*
113. Tickell's Warbler *Phylloscopus affinis*
114. Olivaceous Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus griseolus*

Muscicapinae

115. Tickell's Blue-Flycatcher *Cyornis tickelliae*
116. Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassina*

Monarchinae

117. Asian Paradise-Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi*
118. Black-naped Monarch-Flycatcher *Hypothymis azurea*

Paridae

119. Great Tit *Parus major*

Sittidae

120. Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch *Sitta castanea*

Dicaeidae

121. Tickell's Flowerpecker *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos*

Nectariniidae

122. Purple Sunbird *Nectarinia asiatica*

Zosteropidae

123. Oriental White Eye *Zosterops palpebrosus.*

Estrildidae

124. Spotted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*

Passerinae

125. House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Sturnidae

126. Brahminy Starling *Sturnus pagodarum*
127. Grey-headed Starling *Sturnus malabaricus*
128. Rosy Starling *Sturnus roseus*
129. Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*
130. Asian Pied Starling *Sturnus contra*
131. Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*
132. Bank Myna *Acridotheres ginginianus*
133. Jungle Myna *Acridotheres fuscus*

Oriolidae

134. Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*
135. Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis*
136. Black-headed Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus*

Dicruridae

137. Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*
138. Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus*
139. White-bellied Drongo *Dicrurus caerulescens*
140. Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus hottentottus*
141. Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus*

Corvidae

142. House Crow *Corvus splendens*
143 Jungle Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos*
144. Indian Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda*

CORRESPONDENCE

NEW SITE RECORD OF YELLOW THROATED BULBUL (Pycnonotus xantholaemus, Jerdon 1845) IN PARVATHAMALAI Hill, THIRUVANNAMALAI DISTRICT, TAMILNADU, by KALAI MANI A, M.Sc Student, Department of Wildlife Biology, A.V.C. College, Mayilladuthurai, Tamil Nadu, India. Email: manikalai16@yahoo.com

Introduction

The Yellow-throated Bulbul *Pycnonotus xantholaemus* (Jerdon 1845) is an endemic bird to southern India (Ali and Ripley 1987; Subramanya *et al.* 2006; Bird life International 2010). The species is locally distributed in southern Andhra Pradesh, eastern Karnataka, eastern Kerala, and northern Tamil Nadu (Subramanya *et al*.2006; Narayan et al.2006). Recent evidence suggests that the species is listed as vulnerable. Mainly the species decline is due to habitat destruction, especially by granite industries and overgrazing problems.

Yellow-throated Bulbul is a common resident and it generally associated with boulder strewn hillsides or rocky outcrops with dense undergrowth, usually under either thorn scrub-jungle, scrub-jungle, mixed dry or moist deciduous forest from 300-1800m. This bulbul's local or altitudinal migration might depend on the availability of fruiting trees in their habitat (Birdlife International 2010).

Yellow-throated Bulbul is shy in nature (Grimmett *et al* 2005). Commonly encountered in pairs or small groups of six or more it breeds mainly after the onset of the southwest monsoon. In the recent surveys conducted at 75 places including the localities of six historical sites (Thondebhavi,

Banathimari, Shivanahalli, Devanahalli, Chinthamani, Sadahalli), the Yellow-throated Bulbul could not be documented (Subramanya *et. al.* 2006). Birdlife International has pointed out that many of the habitats which are ideally suited for this species have not been surveyed at all.

Therefore, as a first step, I undertook a field trip to Parvathamalai in Thiruvannamalai District of Tamilnadu on 5th November 2010 in search of YTB.

Trip to Parvathamalai

Parvathamalai (12.43^{O} N 78.99^{O}E)is a part of Javadu hill range in Eastern Ghats located near Thenmahadevamangalam village which is about 20 kms off Polur. Polur is some 35 kms north of Thiruvannamalai, Tamilnadu, India. There is a very popular Lord Shiva temple at the top of the Parvathamalai hill. This temple is said to have been constructed some 2000 years ago. Around 1000 devotes visit this hill temple everyday to offer their prayers.

I reached that place in the morning and surveyed the habitat which is mainly a thorn scrub jungle. The first YTB was sighted at about 400 meters. Another pairs of YTB was recorded catching dragon flies. In all I saw six pairs of YTB in the hill. One was found feeding on Muntingia cherries and Ficus berries.

I also recorded White-browed bulbuls *(Pycnonotus luteolus)* (WBB) which were fairly common. Though the WBB were found in association with YTBs, the former were more active and vociferous. My sighting of YTB is the first ever site record of the Parvathamalai hill.

I recorded the following bird species during my short visit to the hill:-

Sl No	Common name	Scientific name
1.	Grey Francolin	*Francolinus pondicerianus*
2.	Eurasian Collared Dove	*Streptopelia decaocto*
3.	Coppersmith Barbet	*Megalaima haemacephala*
4.	Indian Roller	*Coracias benghalensis*
5.	Black-rumped Flameback Woodpecker	*Dinopium benghalense*
6.	Palm Swift	*Cypsiurus balasiensis*
7.	Green Bee-eater	*Merops orientalis*
8.	Blue-beard Bee-eater	*Nyctyornis athertoni*
9.	Common Kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus*
10.	Shikra	*Accipiter badius*
11.	Pond Heron	*Ardeola grayii*
12.	Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*
13.	Rufous Treepie	*Dendrocitta vagabunda*
14.	Black Drongo	*Dicrurus macrocercus*
15.	White-bellied Drongo	*Dicrurus leucophaeus*
16.	House Crow	*Corvus splendens*
17.	Large-billed Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*
18.	Red-whiskered Bulbul	*Pycnonotus jocosus*
19.	Yellow-throated Bulbul	*Pycnonotus xantholaemus*
20.	White-browed Bulbul	*Pycnonotus luteolus*
21.	Red-vented Bulbul	*Pycnonotus cafer*
22.	Common Tailorbird	*Orthotomus sutorius*
23.	Indian Robin	*Saxicoloides fulicata*
24.	Pied Bushchat	*Saxicola caprata*
25.	Plain Prinia	*Prinia inornata*
26.	Oriental Magpie Robin	*Copsychus saularis*
27.	Golden Oriole	*Oriolus oriolus*
28.	Barn Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*
29.	Eurasian Crag Martin	*Hirundo rupestris*
30.	Red-rumped Swallow	*Hirundo daurica*
31.	Jungle Babbler	*Turdoides striatus*
32.	Yellow-billed Babbler	*Turdoides affinis*
33.	Oriental Skylark	*Alauda gulgula*
34.	Paddyfield Pipit	*Anthus rufulus*
35.	Purple-rumped Sunbird	*Nectarinia zeylonica*
36.	Purple Sunbird	*Nectarinia asiatica*
37.	Loten's Sunbird	*Nectarinia lotenia*
38.	White-browed Wagtail	*Motacilla maderaspatensis*
39.	Indian Silverbill	*Lonchura malabarica*
40.	Scaly-breasted Munia	*Lonchura punctulata*

Acknowledgements

I thank my mother, Mrs.Rani, and the villagers of Parvathmalai for my successful trip in search of the YTB.

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NEST OF DUSKY CRAG-MARTIN (Hirundo concolor) USED BY RED RUMPED SWALLOW (Hirundo daurica).

by SACHIN BALKRISHNA PALKAR, Member of the Sahyadri Nisarga mitra, Chiplun. Sathyabhama sadan, Mumbai-Goa Highway, House no. 100, Near D.B.J. College. A/P-Chiplun, Ratnagiri district, Maharashtra 415605, India. Email: sachinbpalkar82@gmail.com.

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica* and Dusky Crag-Martin *Hirundo concolor* belong to Hirundinidae family. In 2009 a pair of Dusky Crag-Martins had built a nest in the campus of D.B.J. College in Chiplun, Dist. Ratnagiri. The pair was successful in raising the chicks.

In 2010, the same nest was used by a pair of Red-rumped Swallows. The Red-rumped Swallow pair started building a nest chamber adjoining the nest of Dusky crag martin, which was built in 2009. This type of nest was not observed by us elsewhere, therefore, I think this is the first record.

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BARN OWL (Tyto alba) CHICKS AT NEMMELI, THIRUVARUR DISTRICT OF TAMIL NADU, *by M. BUBESH GUPTHA AND N. SRIDHARAN, Wildlife Institute of India, Post Box #18, Chandrabani, Dehradun 248 001, India. bubesh.guptha@gmail.com,*

I found chicks of barn owl (*Tyto alba*) in Thiruvarur district on second week of March 2006. These mysterious birds were said to be nesting at Nemmeli village 10 º 20´ and 10º 07´N; 79º 15' and 79º 45' E which is about eight kilometers from Thiruvarur. The bird had selected the chimney of an abandoned old house to nest. There were five Barn Owl chicks in a burrow near the chimney. We clicked a few photographs; the chicks were weak and unattended. The Barn Owl is a common nocturnal bird. It is well distributed through entire Europe, Africa and Asia. (Ali, S. and Ripley, S.D (1983) In these open habitats with xerophytes, the Barn Owl hunts almost only small mammals, mainly jerboas and gerbils, and occasionally insects, amphibians, reptiles and birds (Taylor, 1994; Roulin, 2002).

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to guide them on their breeding grounds at Siberia as the young birds do not have adults to follow. Once they reach Siberia, their natural instincts would be stimulated and the road-map of their migratory route would be etched in their memory. The young Siberian Cranes usually memorize the migratory path while migrating up and down with their parents. An analogous research on the Whooping Crane involving Canada and the United States of America has met with substantial success in the recent past. The captive bred Whooping Cranes introduced into the wild now migrate unaided. A vital component of the reintroduction scheme in the Midwest hinged on the creation of a migratory flock that moves between Wisconsin and traditional wintering grounds in Florida. In 2001, the imaginative technique of teaching captive reared birds to follow ultra-light aircraft was tried, because the young birds had no experienced mature birds to follow. The experiment worked and they now migrate unaided.

Future challenges to bird life in general and Sarus and Siberian Cranes in particular are evidently formidable and urgent intervention is becoming a compelling necessity. India's coveted bird sanctuary at Bharatpur is bogged down with pointless controversies and its marshes are rapidly drying out. This has frankly exposed our waning ecological wisdom and debilitated advocacy in resolving issues relating to the protection of our natural resources. These are the disturbing realities and under these circumstances, the resurgence of Siberian Cranes in their wintering range at KNP is radically bleak.

For the Sarus Crane and other endangered species, the ever-exploding human population and footprint profusion on the planet, coupled with gloomier projections of climate change, the situation is set to worsen. Therefore, modern reintroduction techniques offer a lifeline for such displaced and threatened species - a means by which they might be relocated and thus continue to live and evolve in a free-living state!

Thanking you,
Yours in bird conservation
S. Sridhar, Publisher, NLBW

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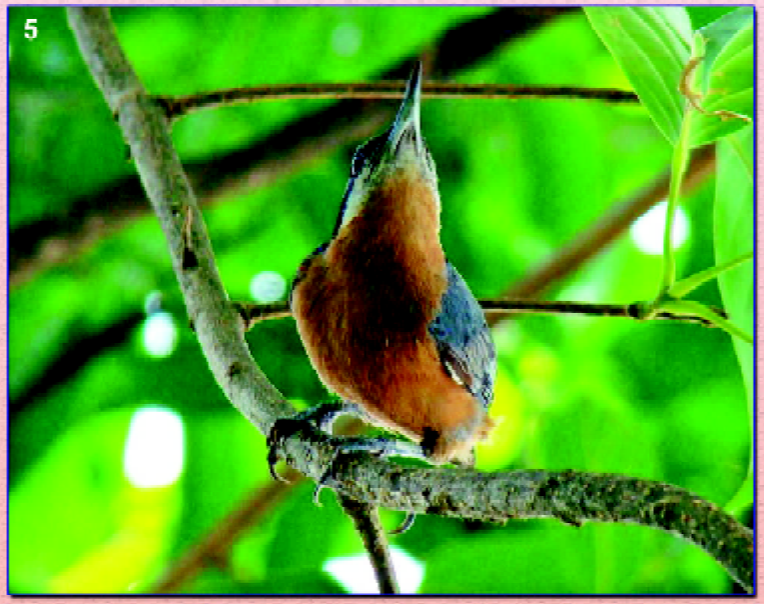
Cover Photographs

Avifauna of Buxa Tiger Reserve: A Field Trip Report
(details in pages 74-76, Vol 50, No 5, Sept-Oct 2010)

1. Black-crested Bulbul *(Pycnonotus melanicterus)*
2. Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch *(Sitta castanea)*
3. Lesser Necklaced Laughing Thrush *(Garrulax monileger)*
4. Hill Mynah *(Gracula religiosa)*
5. Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch *(Sitta castanea)*
6. Silver-eared Mesia *(Leiothrix argentauris)*
7. Jungle Owlet *(Glaucidium radiatum)*
8. Malayan Night Heron *(Gorsachius melanolophus)*
9. Golden-fronted leafbird *(Chloropsis aurifrons)*

All photographs by ***Shantanu Bhattacharya***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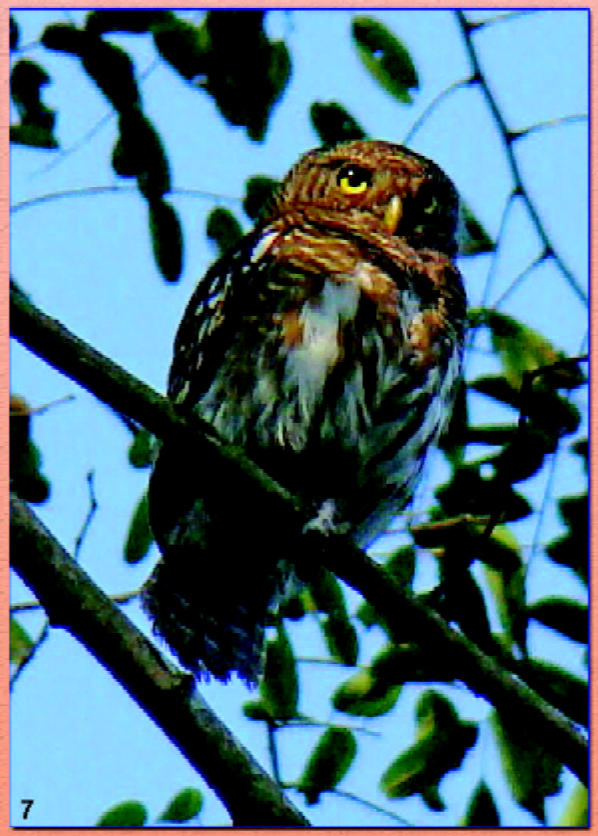
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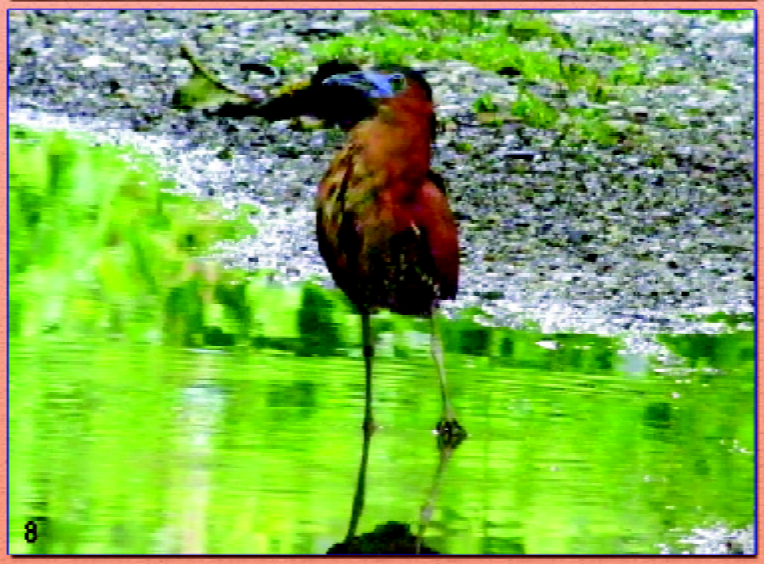
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